

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 05118 031554Z

46

ACTION EUR-12

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAJ-01 ACDA-07

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 5118

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US

SUBJECT: SOVIET VIEWS ON ARBATOV APRIL 2 PRAVDA ARTICLE

REF: MOSCOW 5082

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 05118 031554Z

1. SOVIET AMERICANOLOGISTS ARE ACCENTUATING THE POSITIVE

IN ARBATOV'S APRIL 2 PRAVDA ARTICLE (REFTEL), BUT CONCERN OVER CONSEQUENCES OF ANGOLA ALSO SEEPS THROUGH. END SUMMARY.

2. AT SPASO FILM SHOWING FOR MFA USA DIVISION AND USA INSTITUTE PERSONNEL APRIL 2, SOVIET GUESTS MADE A POINT OF STRESSING POSITIVE INTENTION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ARBATOV'S ARTICLE. THREE OF THEM DID SO WITH ME--ONE CALLED IT A "ROSY" PICTURE--AND EMBASSY STAFF WAS GETTING THE SAME MESSAGE.

3. IN ARBATOV'S ABSENCE, RANKING USA INSTITUTE OFFICIAL WAS DEPUTY DIRECTOR BOGDANOV. HE TOLD ME IT WAS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE ARTICLE APPEARED IN PRAVDA. HE IMPLIED OPPOSITION TO SUCH FAVORABLE TREATMENT BY "SOME," AND CONTINUED THAT "SINCE U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS ARE BEING CONSIDERED NOW AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS IN THE SOVIET UNION," THE FACT THAT A BASICALLY POSITIVE ARTICLE LIKE THIS ONE APPEARS IN PRAVDA IS SIGNIFICANT. HE ADVISED CAREFULLY READING; WHILE HE REALIZED THAT WE COULD NOT AGREE WITH ALL THE POINTS MADE IN THE ARTICLE, IT WAS NUANCED AND BALANCED.

4. OTHERS ECHOED BOGDANOV. MFA USA DIVISION MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS COUNSELOR SOKOLOV TOLD EMBOFF THE ARTICLE WAS AN ARTICULATE RENDERING OF THE SOVIET POSITION, AND HE THOUGHT IT WAS "GREAT;" USA INSTITUTE FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT HEAD TOFIMENKO SAID IT WAS INTENDED AS A SIGN OF CONTINUED SOVIET INTEREST IN DETENTE, AND HE WAS GLAD TO HEAR FROM AMERICANS PRESENT THAT IT ALSO SEEMED TO THEM A REAFFIRMATION OF SOVIET INTEREST IN IMPROVING RELATIONS. ASKED HOW ONE DISTINGUISHES REAL BELIEF FROM PUBLIC DECLARATION IN SUCH AN ARTICLE, USA INSTITUTE STAFFER ZAMOSHKIN SAID THIS WAS A PROBLEM, BUT ARBATOV WAS ONE OF THE "MORE SINCERE" SOVIET WRITERS.

5. AT THE SAME TIME, SOVIETS WERE SOMEWHAT MORE RESPONSIVE THAN USUAL TO U.S. OBJECTIONS. BOGDANOV AGREED WITH MY STATEMENT THAT ANGOLA WAS A REAL PROBLEM IN OUR RELATIONS. IT HAD HAD RESULTS WHICH WERE UNFORESEEN, BY HIM AT LEAST. HE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THE SPECIAL SENSITIVITY OF THE CUBAN ISSUE FOR THE U.S. (ON CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 05118 031554Z

MARCH 30, BOGDANOV HAD IMPLIED TO VISITING KENNEDY SCHOOL INSTITUTE OF POLITICS DIRECTOR JOANATHAN MOORE THAT HE HAD BEEN ONE OF THOSE WHO THOUGHT USE OF CUBAN TROOPS WAS A MISTAKE--THOUGH HE WOULD NOT AGREE THAT IT HAD BEEN THE SOVIETS WHO ASKED FOR THEM--AND AFFIRMED THAT THE USSR HAD NO INTENTION OF INVOLVING ITSELF DEEPLY IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS, HAVING BEEN BURNED IN ITS AFRICAN RELATIONS SEVERAL TIMES. ALTHOUGH THE U.S. SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED

THAT THE USSR FEELS OBLIGED TO SUPPORT NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, HE COULD SEE THAT THE MANNER AND DEGREE OF SUPPORT MIGHT CONCERN US.) BOGDANOV ADDED THAT, WITH CUBANS ON THE GROUND IN ANGOLA, WE SHOULD NOT THINK SOVIETS COULD GET THEM OUT AT WILL.

6. IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S COMMENTS ON ANGOLA AT SPASO, TROFIMENKO SAID HE REGRETTED THE U.S. WAS SO PREOCCUPED WITH ANGOLA: THE U.S. ACTS AS IF THERE WOULD BE MANY MORE ANGOLAS, BUT THERE WILL NOT BE; ANGOLA IS UNIQUE. WHEN EMBOFF POINTED OUT THAT THE USSR WILL NEED TO BALANCE SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS WITH ITS INTEREST IN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., TROFIMENKO REPLIED, "I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THIS IS BEING CONSIDERED. WE PLACE GREAT WEIGHT ON OUR RELATIONS WITH THE U.S."

7. COMMENT. THESE REMAKRS TEND TO CONFIRM OUR OWN INITIAL IMPRESSION OF ARBATOV'S ARTICLE: A REAFFIRMATION OF SOVIET COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. WITHOUT CONCESSIONS ON PRINCIPLE. BUT THEY ARE MORE EXPLICIT THAN ARBATOV HIMSELF WAS (OR COULD BE IN PRAVDA) ABOUT SOVIET CONCERN OVER DEPTH AND EXTEND OF QUESTIONING IN U.S.
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